

Feb. 24, 1992
9 Kaine Terrace
Albany, New York
12208-1215

Harold Weisberg
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Dear Harold:

I have just read Whitewash IV. Thank God America has a smart vigilant and questioning citizen such as you. I would like to ask you a few questions about it.

yes Did you ever get the tests on the ballistics evidence ~~or~~ ^{we} did another researcher get them since the book was published?

no On page 76 there is a mention of Oswald meeting with two known subversives. This is supposed to have come from FBI agent Hosty. Has there been any follow up to that over the years? Do we know now what he meant and who these two subvervises were?

none
I have Where would the neutron activation and spectro-graphic tests be today? Do we know for a fact that such tests were done?

? On page 133 in an excerpt from an Executive Transcript of 1/21/64 in which Rankin admits that the Commission had color photographs from the autopsy. Also he asked for minutes of the autopsy. Has there been any any evidence since 1974 that such minutes exist?

too much for me On page 137 you cite the FBI's first definitive report of the assassination. May I have a copy of this if you have one in your files please?

archive me by FBI On page 139, has the Secret Service ever before or since taken anyone into custody to the extent they did with Marina Oswald? *yes*

(2)

On page 142 you cite a Mr. Joseph Goulden who claimed Oswald worked for the FBI as an informer. Do you have anything in writing between yourself and Goulden on this subject that you would be willing to share? Do we know now the name of the unnamed law enforcement officer in Dallas?

I noticed when you cited the FBI's response to meetings with Oswald they twice met him and then had a report written within about two weeks, first interview June 26 1962, report July 10 1962, second interview August 16 1962, report August 30 1962 but on the third interview August 10 1963 nearly a year after the last it took nearly two months for the report to be written October 31 1963.

Why did it take so long for this report to be written?

Also apparently FBI agent Hosty went to the Paine residence 3 separate times looking for Oswald, specifically asking for his whereabouts for Nov. 1 and Nov. 5 1963. On what dates exactly did Hosty do this and was Oswald really missing for Nov 1 and Nov 5 1963? Were there reports filed for these Paine visits by Hosty?

On page 182 you cite a letter from J. Lee Rankin to Senator Javitts for March 11, 1964, the significant portion reads "At this point in the investigation there appears to be nothing of significance which should not be revealed to the American public because of National Security or any other consideration".

I would like a copy of this letter if you still have one.

On page 185 there is a letter reproduced from the office of the deputy attorney general to Bud Fensterwald Jr. Could you clarify for me what the "memorandum of transfer" is? and who wrote it?

(3)

How many Executive Sessions were there during the Warren Commission and what are the dates? Are any of these still withheld?

The Executive Session for Sept. 18 1964 was faked. I find that typical although somewhat surprising. Is this faked transcript available? I would like a copy. Do we have any idea what the deleted dissenting footnote was supposed to look like?

Lastly, in return for all of this work I have 14 audiotapes of the Dallas symposium I would like to give to you. I would love to hear your comments. They all have good sound quality to them.

Sincerly Yours

Joseph Backes
Joseph Backes

Mr. Joseph Backes
9 Kaine Terrace
Albany, N.Y. 12208-1215

3/12/92

Dear Mr. Backes,

I appreciate the time, effort and cost to which you went in sending me the sound tapes of the Dallas symposium of last November. I also appreciate the fact that you believed you were being helpful to me and that you so intended. I write not only to thank you but because it did not work out the way you intended and because I think you can learn from it.

First, if you do not know, we are almost 80, both in impaired health, and I have many health-related problems. And I try to respond to reasonable questions and to do other work.

My day began at 12:30 this morning, only about a half hour or so earlier than usual. I am wide awake so instead of tossing about I get up and work, hoping to be able to make up for some of the loss of sleep with an afternoon nap. It is now more than 15 hours since I got up, there are other things I must do today, and because of your package and unanticipated consequences I'll get no nap. *(No criticism or complaint intended - 3/21)*

From the time I returned from my thrice-weekly blood-testing and physical therapy I had only a few minutes before we had to leave for medical appointments that kept us until after noon. We picked the mail up as we returned and after lunch I began to go through it because we try to respond to letters and make packages for shipment promptly so they will not accumulate. Meanwhile, as we moved around in the kitchen and living room we found a mystery- popcorn scattered. Neither of us bends well but what we saw we picked up.

Then I came to your large priority mail carton, 12" x almost 16". I wondered what that could hold. And as soon as I lifted it to carry it from the kitchen into the living room, where I have special provisions for sitting because when I sit I must keep my legs elevated, I saw the source of the popcorn as the package shed it. So, I hastened back into the kitchen, got some newspapers and placed them on the stove and proceeded to empty the package. Scattering more popcorn despite trying not to. While I had the box empty, I found your letter, those several pages from the Dallas conference and the 14 audio cassettes you made of those proceedings.

Using popcorn and so large a box was not very bright. Had you wrapped the cassettes in a little newspaper and then used a grocery bag for the outside wrapping you have had a package less than 10" long by 3" and about 2" high.

But putting all that popcorn in a box not sealed at either end assures that the popcorn will be distributed each time the box is touched. What I could keep in the box as I reached in and removed the contents and what fell onto the newspapers I took outside, without being able to dress for the very strong and very cold wind in which I am not supposed to be in any event, for the birds. I do hope it is unsalted because birds can tolerate very little salt.

My wife cleaned the floors again and about a half-hour late I drove her for the week's grocery chopping, taking some ~~of~~ the mail with me to read. I was deep into this when with a loud metallic noise the car shuddered. I looked up to see a vagrant shopping card bouncing off the passenger door and then along that side of the car. It is dented, it will require body work and repainting, and this would not have happened if we had not had all that popcorn to cope with. In turn this means more time in travelling to get estimates, time of which at almost 79 I have less than I'd like, and some ensuing nuisances and more time wasted.

You intended none of this, of course, and if you had given mature thought to making the package it would not have happened. And it would have taken less time and money of ~~of~~ you. Or, from this learn the popcorn lesson: you don't need it on such packages and it will, inevitably, make problems for recipients without an unique benefit possible.

You have a different opinion of that symposium than I do. You and most of the others there were excited by it, enjoyed it, think you learned from it, and if you want to be in contact with reality you have to begin by unlearning all that nut stuff. It was, to me, a gathering of nuts to spouse their unproven and almost always irrational and impossible theories that at best only add to the existing confusion and frustration. Do you need more than what has come to light about the so-called "tramps" to indicate this to you? In 1968 I proved and let Garrison know that they were entirely irrelevant and after reading Stone's script as well as before I warned him about this and more. Without response.

I cannot possibly justify the time to listen to 14 cassettes of such ~~grassy~~ kid stuff, when it is not worse. Yet the tapes have a value. I'll give them to local Hood College, where all my records will be a permanent public archive, because they represent what is important in the overall historical record. One aspect, shorthand, is in their own words what most of those of us all lumped together as "critics" really are, know and do not know, lead and have led to and mean.

I get many letters every day. Can you imagine the time required to respond to many letters as long as yours on a daily basis, the time this has taken for more than 25 years?

Because I know people care and are concerned, I do the best I can. I respond to all. But if those who write would think ^{unwisely} ~~unwisely~~ they would, I think, prefer that I have that time for other work.

While sitting and holding it in my hand, knowing that I cannot take the time for full response, ¹¹⁴ written brief answers opposite the questions. I can't take time for longer responses. I return your letter with these annotations. I know you'll have trouble reading but I can do no more.

Where I wrote that you could get that long first FBI report from the Archives or from the FBI, I should have told you that it will cost considerably less if you ask the FBI for it. It is CD1 in the Commission's files. There are five volumes. The first is the Oswald text, the last is on Ruby, and the others are appendices in futile support -

rather supposed support of the Oswald text. I suggest you order the first volume, the Oswald text, first and then see if you really want the others. I did not.

For your intentions and efforts I do thank you because I do appreciate them.

If you are really serious in your assassination interest, I suggest that you be your own devil's advocate and ask yourself if whatever you are considering is really reasonable and if it passes that test, made with real thought and maturity, ask if it is possible.

Most of what is available, most of what gets any attention, is conspiracy theorizing ^{that} ~~that~~ with almost no exceptions is misleading, misinformative, deceptive and confuses and frustrates those who are concerned. If you knew the available information you'd also have reason to question the honesty and integrity of some.

So, with both thanks and regrets, best wishes,



Harold Weisberg